

AN INFALLIBLE SIGN OF REVIVAL

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“The LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”
Isaiah 2:11

IN the eternal past the Lord alone was exalted. When He dwelt alone or ever the earth was, and when He commenced the mighty works of His creation—and the universe sprang into being at the fiat of His unhindered will—He alone was exalted. He made multitudes of creatures. Perhaps we have no idea how many of them there were and in what varied forms intelligent beings were created, but the Lord alone was exalted.

Every angel adored Him—every creature knew its Lord. It was an ill day when there broke out a rival spirit and when evil began to set up its throne in opposition to the God of good. The leader of the angels—the light bearer—sought to erect a rival throne. “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning.”

Then, by and by, in process of time, upon this world God's glory was dimmed. Here, too, another spake and was believed, and God was doubted. Another claimed man's love and gained it, and God was disobeyed. On earth no longer was the Lord alone exalted as He had been in the quiet glades of Eden when our first parents worshipped none but God, and counted it the very cream and flower of their being that they might serve the Most High who had made them what they were.

Now look where we may, in this poor, fallen world, the Lord alone is not exalted. But there are lords and gods many—spiritual wickednesses and principalities of evil—which set themselves up in opposition to the great King of kings and Lord of lords. Yet as surely as JEHOVAH lives, He will win the victory in this conflict. Ere the drama of the world's history shall come to a close, it shall be known throughout the entire universe that the Lord, He is God—and the Lord alone shall be exalted.

It is a part of the work of grace—nay, it is the main object of the work of grace, and it is an object also of the work of providence to subserve this great end—that the Lord alone shall be exalted. For your comfort and for your instruction, then, first, notice the occasions when my text has been true. I shall take the text out of its connection, not, I hope, unduly, and show that on a large scale there are several days in which the Lord alone has been exalted, and then we will come back to a little quiet meditation and look into our own experience to see whether there have not been days with us when the Lord alone has been exalted.

I. Come then, first, and notice WHEN THE LORD ALONE HAS BEEN EXALTED ON A LARGE SCALE.

The Lord alone has been exalted among men *whenever He has been pleased to reveal Himself in the plenitude of His power*. The revelations under the law of God were mainly revelations girt with terror. Under the Old Testament dispensation you find God coming out of His place to shake terribly the earth. When He bows the heavens and comes down, the mountains flow at His presence. The LORD alone was exalted in those days when He vindicated His justice and displayed His power against His enemies.

Remember the flood when, after so many years of warning, the ark being prepared for the salvation of the believing few, God was pleased to draw up the floodgates of heaven and to bid the cataracts of earth leap upward instead of downward, till over all the face of the world there was nothing but one

mighty all-devouring wave. When in majestic silence the ark floated over the bosom of the world which had become the grave of JEHOVAH's creatures—then the Lord alone was exalted in that day.

And when men had multiplied again upon the face of the earth and His people had gone down into Egypt, you know well the story, how proud Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD that I should obey his voice?” Then Moses came and with many strokes of his mystic rod he afflicted the fields of Zoan, he turned their waters into blood and slew their fish. He spake and the flies came—and the frogs and the locusts, and that without number—yea, the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength, and in that night, when a cry went up from every Egyptian household, and the people of Israel were led forth like sheep by the hands of Moses and Aaron, the Lord alone was exalted. Then the nations knew that JEHOVAH wrought His will among the sons of men.

Nor was that all. When in their desperation, the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the very depths of the sea, the Lord turned and looked upon them, and troubled the host of Pharaoh and took off their chariot wheels so that they drave heavily, when the sea returned in the fullness of its strength, and the depths covered them until there was not one of them left, then Miriam's song, “Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously,” was but an exposition of our text, “The LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”

Time would fail me to tell forth all His mighty works, nor is there any need for me to recapitulate the records of the book of the wars of the Lord, “for the LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name”—and when He comes forth to battle, then the Lord alone is exalted in that day.

May we never live to see a pestilence sweep through this land! But should such a visitation of God come upon us, then will our houses of prayer be thronged and men will begin to cry unto the Most High. May we never hear the noise of war in our streets! If such a calamity should befall us, and the Lord take the sword of war out of the scabbard, men will begin to learn righteousness. May He be pleased to have mercy upon us and lead us by gentle means to glorify His name. Were He to come in judgment then would the spirit of atheism and of idolatry, which now with brazen faces dare confront the Gospel of Christ, betake themselves to the darkness in which they were begotten. When the Lord comes forth in terror then is He alone exalted.

Let us change the theme now and see, too, how *whenever God comes forth in His great mercy*, His name alone is exalted. The day when the infant church of Christ gathered in an upper room and sat there, all its members being of one heart and of one soul, and the Lord revealed His grace by the baptism of the Holy Spirit—when was heard the sound of the rushing mighty wind, when the tongues of fire sat on the disciples—when they began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance, and thousands were added to the church, that was a day when the Lord alone was exalted.

Was there any whisper on that day of honor to be given to Peter, or to John, or to James in the church of God? Think you there was any trace of the spirit that could say, “I am of Cephas,” and “I am of John”? Ah, no. The name of the Lord was very precious to His people that day. They gave glory to the Lord both in the temple and in their own houses, eating their bread with gladness of heart. Only let the Lord show Himself in great blessing, then He alone is exalted. Behold, His enemies fly before Him because of His grace.

Well, brethren, it will be even so by and by “in that day” of which we were reading just now with so much delight—when “the mountain of the LORD's house shall be exalted on the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it.” There is to come a day when Christ shall be known and loved of every land. When the dwellers in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust.

I am not going into any details or prophetic descriptions of the millennium, but we do expect a day when the Gospel shall win its way over this whole globe, and the poor world, instead of being swathed in mist and fog, shall come out of the cloud of her unbelief and out of the darkness of her sin, and shine like her sister stars at the feet of her great Creator.

In that day the Lord alone shall be exalted. You will hear no more of the name of Pope, or patriarch, or a great religious leader receiving the chief honor. No great name set in the front of a section of the church shall be shouted in that day—the Lord alone shall be exalted.

So again it will be when yet farther on in human history the end shall come—when you and I and all born of woman shall stand before the dread tribunal of the last great day—then shall the Lord alone be exalted. There shall be no pomp of kings before that great white throne. There shall be no glare of riches there before the prince of the kings of the earth. Honor and fame that were so feverishly sought and so highly prized by the sons of men, shall melt away then like the fat of rams.

Kings and their serfs, princes and their subjects shall stand together. There shall be no idol gods in that day, nor shall men receive homage of their fellows, but while the earth shall be reeling to its doom, and the heavens themselves dissolving, the Lord alone shall be exalted. JEHOVAH's great and glorious name shall fill all ears and His majesty shall impress all hearts. May we be found in Christ in that great day! The Lord grant it for His mercy's sake.

II. Now, in the second place, I am going to talk to you on humbler topics, endeavoring to bring our subject down to our own experience and to see WHEN THE LORD ALONE HAS BEEN EXALTED ON A SMALLER SCALE.

When it is written, the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, we may understand that what is true on a great scale is equally true on a little scale in God's kingdom. He works according to rule, so that if you split up some great crystal of His providence into as small fragments as you please, each fragment shall be found to be crystallized in the same form.

So, if in the grand events of history God is to be exalted, you will also find that in the little world of your own experience—in the history which is only recorded in your own pocket-book—in the story of your own life—that God is exalted too. Brothers and sisters, many of you already know, and I pray that others here who as yet do not know it may be brought to know it, that there have been red-letter days in your life when the Lord alone has been exalted.

One of the earliest of these blessed days was *when you first had a sense of sin*. Ah, I had no thought how black I was until that day. I had never dreamed how corrupt my heart was, how vile my nature, how desperate my condition, how near the borders of hell I stood, till then. There came at last that day, in which the light of God shone into my soul and I saw the evil of my state, the danger of my condition and the horrible rottenness of my whole nature even to the very core.

Do you remember such a day in your experience, beloved brethren? I know you do. Oh, what a withering day it was. Your flesh is grass, and do you not remember when the grass withered and when the flower thereof faded away because the Spirit of the Lord was blowing upon it? Surely the people are grass. Do you recollect when you perceived in your heart a new rendering of that old passage, "And we all do fade as a leaf and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away," when you found your righteousness to be only a fading leaf and the strength of your passions to be like the wind that took you right away and carried you—you knew not whither? You seemed to be like a sear leaf blown away in a tempest of sin.

Before that, you had thought yourself to be very fine—very few were more respectable or honorable than you. If you had not many glittering virtues, yet you felt you had no degrading vices. There was much about you that others might imitate, and if people did not respect you, you felt very angry—you felt they ought to pay great deference to such a one as you were.

But you did not feel like this on that day—not on that day! No. In that day you threw your idols to the moles and to the bats. You wanted to forget that you ever thought you were righteous. You felt ashamed of even your most precious golden idol—your self-righteousness. You wanted to disown it and you were afraid anybody should remind you that you ever worshipped it.

It seemed such a horrible thing that you should ever have talked about acceptance before God by your good works. Good works! The very thought seemed a sarcasm on God, an irony of the devil. Good works indeed! Your prayers, your tears, your church-goings, your chapel-goings, all seemed like so

much dung. You understood Paul's strong language that day—your own righteousness was as offensive to you as his was to him. You put all your old hopes away with abhorrence. Oh, I know what happened to you—the Lord alone was exalted that day.

If anybody had preached a sermon that day about the dignity of human nature, you would have been inclined, like Jenny Geddes, to throw a stool at his head. If anybody had talked that day of the great things man is capable of, and of virtue that still remains in him after the slight mischief of the fall, you would have felt indignant at such infamous falsehood, for God had stripped you bare of all your glory.

In that day you felt yourself to be cast in a ditch and your own clothes abhorred you. But oh! if anyone had preached of the splendor of the great God that day, of the infinite majesty of His holiness, and of His justice, you would in silence have bowed your head and shed tears of contrition which would have been the best form of adoration from your penitent heart.

If they had begun to preach the amazing mercy and the love of God in Christ, your heart would have leaped to hear the very sound of it, for there are no two things that ever so sweetly met together as an empty sinner and a full Christ. When a soul sees itself it has got the eye with which to see Jesus. He that can see his own deformities, shall not be long before he sees the Lord's unspeakable perfections. In that day of self-humbling, cutting away and casting down, I know the Lord alone was exalted in your soul.

Well, then there came another day in your experience which is very sweet to remember—the day *when you saw Jesus hanging on the tree*—when you put your trust in Him and knew that He had taken away your iniquity and blotted out your sin. Oh, I do remember that day—it was my best marriage day and birthday, too—the day when I knew that sin was gone and gone forever.

How bright the cross shone that day! How bright were the eyes of Jesus and how fair His wounds! Ah, the Lord alone was exalted that day. Had anybody preached to me of the power of sacraments and the magic of priests, I would have had abhorred them in my inmost soul and I would have spoken my horror of the thought of giving the glory of the Lord to another.

When the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin, where is the dastard that dares ask me to let him wash me and to let him put away my sin for me? The blood, the blood of Jesus has taken all our guilt away, once and forever—and woe betide the man that dares to stand up and put himself side by side with the all-cleansing Christ! That was how we felt. The Lord alone was exalted in that day.

We feel just the same today. I am sure if people knew the power of the blood of Christ they could never become slaves to the superstitions of men. If they felt the force of being justified by faith in Jesus Christ, they would be like Martin Luther when he sprang from his knees on Pilate's staircase, never to go another step in the weary round of man-made ordinances.

What have we to do with these beggarly things when Christ our Lord has set us free and saved us forever from the wrath to come? A sight of Your cross, O Jesus, makes the priests topple down like Dagon before the ark—and the sacraments that once were trusted in, to be despised if placed side by side with You. You alone are exalted in that day.

Since then we have had some other very happy days. The life of a Christian has many illuminated letters in it. Our roll is not written within and without with lamentation. We have high days and holidays, and there are times of nearness to Christ which I hardly dare to describe here. I could venture to talk of them to two or three choice friends that know the secret of the Lord, but these things are not for all ears.

These are days when we realize the meaning of the Song of Songs and bless God that ever the book of Canticles was written, else there would have been in the Bible no expression for our ardent love to Christ. On such days we say with rapture, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." "Thy love is better than wine." "He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love." "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love." "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that you stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please."

Read Rutherford's letters if you know the secret beforehand—if not, they will be an enigma to you, even as the Song of Solomon must always be. This much we may say, *when Christ draws us near to Him*, "The LORD alone is exalted in that day." When He wraps us in His crimson vest and shows us all His name and says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. I have engraved thee on the palms of my hands,"

O brethren, "the LORD alone is exalted in that day." Then self has gone. We cry, "I am black but comely" and the blackness strikes us as much as the comeliness that Christ has put upon us. We sink into nothing at His feet. These manifestation of His glorious love makes us cry like Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." The Lord alone is exalted in that day.

Well, you know, brothers and sisters, that after some of those high flights, when we have been on the top of the mount of transfiguration, we get exalted above measure, and then we have to be humbled. It is a wretched confession to make, but God's people know how true it is. We wander from the Lord and for a while He leaves us to ourselves, when we exalt ourselves.

But *when we return from our wandering*, then the Lord alone is exalted in that day. You know how, perhaps, there have been weeks of estrangement between you and your Lord—He has been jealous of your heart and you have been cold to Him—you have gone perhaps into the world with too worldly a spirit, and the sweetness of His Word has departed from you, and His voice is no longer heard in your soul. Then you begin to cry, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free Spirit." You know what it is to cry,

*"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still;
But now I find an aching void
The world can never fill.*

*"Return, O holy Dove! Return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn
And drove Thee from my breast."*

Ah! when you get your prayer answered, then the Lord alone is exalted in that day.

Do you know what it is to go creeping to the mercy seat where once you used to go so boldly? To go there with many tears and with much shame when you used to go with a radiant face—and yet to find your Jesus waiting there? Do you know what it is to turn to the grand old Book that once you used to read with sacred glee and look there for a sinner's promise such as might suit a broken heart, and to find it come home with just the old power, till the bones which had been broken began to sing again, and your heart once more was joyous in the presence of your Lord? Ah, then I know your own beauty has been turned to ashes and all your comeliness has disappeared, for when the Lord restores a soul that soul also restores the Lord to His proper place—and the Lord alone is exalted in that day.

But at this rate my time will all be gone before I am half through my story. Let me therefore hasten to say, dear brothers and sisters, that the Lord is exalted *when a church begins to sigh and cry for the Lord's presence*. I hope that the power of the Lord is not forsaking us in any measure here, but it is my fret, my jealousy, lest He should in any wise depart from us—lest the spirit of prayer should go from us—lest love to souls should leave us and there should not be abundant conversions in the School and in the ministry, and everywhere around our borders.

Should such a time of dearth ever come to us, it will be a grand thing when we as a church can get together and begin to groan and cry for the Lord to return in power. When a church feels it must get a blessing—I hope we are feeling it now—in proportion as that desire grows into an agony, the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

The preacher will feel—indeed he does feel every day more and more—his own unworthiness and inability for such a work. Every other worker will, in proportion as the desire for God’s glory shall increase, feel himself to be less and less and still less and less in his own esteem. Oh, when we once come to wish for souls, nobody cares about being important, nobody wishes to be in the front—everybody wants to be there if he can serve God, but he does not want any place of honor, or court any badge of distinction by which he shall be known. A church in agony for souls wants only to see men converted, and she does not care how or by whom the work is done as long as the people are brought to Christ. Then is the Lord alone exalted.

When the blessing comes—and it is a notable day when it comes—when the Word is with power and men are stricken down and begin to cry for mercy—when the inquirers are many and the converts are multiplied, and God blesses each brother and each sister with success in soul-winning—oh, then at such times the Lord alone is exalted.

I do believe that whenever God sends prosperity to the church and any of the members of the church begin to ascribe the success to themselves, the blessing is almost sure to go. God will not bless proud workers. If you are going to have a part of the fish for your own self, you may cast the net where you like, but you shall take nothing. But when you are fishing for your Master, He will fill your net to the full.

I often think—and therein am I glad in days of sorrow—that when God means to bless any one of us, He generally lowers us into the very dust. *When we are willing to be nothing*, then the Lord alone is exalted in that day. If you that are cooks were about to serve a dinner, you would not use a dish, I am sure, until first of all you had cleansed it. You would first wipe it right out, then you would set it on the shelf—and when you wanted a goodly dish with which to serve up goodly meat, you would reach down for the empty dish that you had well wiped, would you not?

Some of us do not get quite wiped out of our last success and so we have no more. We still retain a flavor of our last self-congratulation and so the Master will not use us. When He puts us in hot water, makes us see our filth, and then wipes us right out, and we perhaps are inclined to say, “Lord, I am good-for-nothing now,” we shall be more likely to be of some service to Him.

Perhaps He will put us on the shelf for a while. He can easily do that with some of us—a little twinge of pain and sickness—and we are useless. We seem to say, “Lord, what am I but an empty, cracked dish?” Ah, but then He comes and takes us down and uses us—and that is worth waiting for. I always expect a greater blessing when there is greater soul-humbling among us.

Would not you be glad to be humbled, dear brother, if God would use you more as a consequence? Today I saw as I went home some old crocks and broken bricks and pieces of all sorts of earthenware put by the side of the road because the road is going to be widened, and I thought to myself, “If the Lord would only use me as an old broken crock to help to make a roadway for Him to ride through London, so that He might be glorified, I would be glad to be thus honored.”

Do you not feel so too? Well, perhaps He will take you at your word some of these days. Brother, if God humbles you in order to use you, you may not like it as much as you think you will, but still that is how we should demean ourselves. We should be willing to be anything, or to be nothing, according to His will.

When Christian men feel they must live to the glory of God somehow, I know there is a blessing coming—ay, that the blessing has come, for then the Lord alone is exalted. When the man of God says, “I must not live any longer for saving money or simply to bring up my children respectably, or to get a subsistence for myself,” then the Lord is exalted.

And when Christians feel that they cannot live for a party or for a section of the church, but that they must live for God and Christ, and for the pure Word of the Gospel, and that everything else must go overboard except that which is for the glory of God, then we may be sure that the Lord has come amongst us and that He is working mightily.

Behold, these are the signs thereof. When He has insulted all pride, dimmed all human glory, and magnified Himself, then indeed we have times of refreshing from His presence and the Lord alone is exalted in that day.

Now I have almost done. But I want you to notice that there is a day coming—it will come very soon to some of our venerable friends around me. It will come very soon—perhaps quite soon—to some of us in middle life who are still in health—the day *when we shall be called to go upstairs*, because the Master has a message for us. When we read the message, it will say, “The time has come for you to gather up your feet in your bed and to meet your father’s God.” O brothers and sisters, the Lord alone will be exalted in that day if we are indeed His people.

I fancy I see the dying minister when they bring his sermons up to him. Can he glory in them? He says, “I bless God that He enabled me to preach His truth. ‘Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,’ but I cannot glory in these.” If you shall bring up to him the number of his converts, and shall tell him of the churches that he built up, and the places that he has evangelized, I will tell you what he will say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

There take the best saint among us and put him on the borders of Emmanuel’s land, and let him hear the bells of heaven ring out the never-ending Sabbath—listen whether he will talk about himself or about the little church to which he belongs as if it were the whole church of God. Oh no, no, no, a thousand times no. On the borders of Emmanuel’s land all the glory is to the Lord alone.

Redeeming blood, electing love, effectual calling, persevering grace—all these will be sung about, but there will be no songs about ourselves or aught else but God, when we come there. Mother, are you making an idol of that baby? You will not be able to do that when you come near your departing hour. Christian man, are you making an idol of anything you have in this world? It will be utterly abolished then. Anything wherein you are trusting and finding comfort will fail you then. The LORD alone will then be your stay and your song! The LORD alone then!

If you feel the bottom as you wade into the river, you will feel that it is good. But by and by, you will be where there is no bottom—the river will be a river to swim in and then will you need to know that underneath you are the everlasting arms. If you are sure of this, you will take that mighty plunge as when a swimmer stretches out his hands to swim—and you will be in glory in a moment.

And beloved, *when we get into glory*, the Lord alone will be exalted there. What a difference will come over us in the matter of those little things wherein we glory now. Petty trifles sometimes lift us up very high. Oh, how loftily we carry our heads sometimes, poor fools that we are, because of this thing in which we are superior to some fellow worm, or that thing in which we have not erred as some other man has done.

But oh, up there, up there, up there, all harps will be for Jesus! All the vials shall be full of odors for Jesus. Harps and tongues, voices and strings, all for the three-one God. All for the Lord alone. Free grace begins to teach us here that God alone must be exalted—and when we have learnt that lesson, well then, glory will come in to cap the whole and make us feel that it were absurd even to imagine that any person or any thing could share the glory with the infinite majesty of God.

There, now, I have done. Only I would ask you this—Is there one here that will not give God all the glory? If so, dear brother, you cannot be saved. Salvation may almost hinge upon this question—Are you willing to be saved so that the Lord alone shall be exalted in your salvation? Are you willing no more to trust in your good works, your prayers, your tears, your feelings, or anything else of your own, but to come and trust in the finished work of Jesus, and give yourself up absolutely and entirely to be His?

Are you willing to be His servant, His property forever, that henceforth your only glory may be in His dear name, your only boasting in His cross? If so, He accepts you and He will save you, but if you must have the glory, then you shall not have the salvation. Where, then, will your glory be? He that

glories in himself shall perish, but he that will glory only in the Lord shall live forever. God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ISAIAH 2

1-2. The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

What grand hopes are kindled in our bosoms by words like these. The church has always been as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, but still she has not been known in all parts of the world, and she has never been known with that universal eminence which attaches to the things of this world—the things of pomp and show.

But the day shall come when she shall be the highest of the high. Her mountain shall be established “on the tops of the mountains”—when she shall be best known of all the known and shall become what she was always meant to be—the metropolis of the whole world, the center to which all kindreds shall flow. Not the Jews alone shall then possess the oracles of God, but all nations shall flow unto it.

3. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

In these happy days which have, in a measure, begun, but which in their fullness have not yet dawned upon us, the Spirit of the Lord will work in the hearts of multitudes of men a desire after God. They will be willing to worship Him—they will say, “Let us go up to the mountain of JEHOVAH.” They will be anxious to learn what He would teach. This shall be the reason why they go—“He will teach us of his ways.” They shall not only wish to learn, but be quick to practice—“and we will walk in his paths.”

Sometimes we have to complain of the masses of mankind forsaking the worship of God altogether. And too often those that come together come with some inferior motive—not that they may be taught of God. And even some that are, in a manner, taught, are slow to obey. The Lord teaches them by His ministers, but they do not walk in His paths. Blessed days when all this shall be reversed and the multitudes shall flock to the church and to the Christ!

4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

They shall not save their weapons for future use, or believe in the theory that the best way to preserve peace is to be prepared for war—but they shall beat their swords into plowshares and turn their spears into pruning hooks. The spirit which created war shall be conquered. “Whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts?” When lust and envy and hatred shall be dethroned and the Spirit of Christ shall be dominant over the world, then shall they learn war no more.

*“O happy day!
O long-expected day begin!”*

Let each one of us labor mightily according as the Spirit works in us to bring about a consummation so devoutly to be wished.

5. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

The Jew shall come. Long rejecting the Messiah, yet shall he come with the Gentile, and walk in the light of JEHOVAH.

Now the theme changes. We are led to see why it is that a happy state of things does not obtain at this moment, and did not obtain in the land of Judah. Sin—sin is the cause of the mischief—idolatry—the setting up of something in the place of God.

6. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

The nations then had their soothsayers and fortunetellers, and the people of God ought not to have so degraded themselves, but they did and therefore they provoked Him—and they sought out foreigners and entered into league with them, whereas the Lord had bidden them be a people separate unto Himself. It always goes ill with those who profess to be God's people when they forget their separated character and join with the world.

7-8. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasure; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots: their land also is full of idols;

How these things generally go together. If a nation prospers and gets wealthy, it is so apt to seek for itself external worship of a gaudy kind. It must then have its ritualism and its idols, for if men have their gold and have their chariots, the simple worship of the unseen God seems to be beneath the dignity of their taste.

8-9. They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.

Mark the indignant spirit of the prophet, as if he had been an Elias, or had the mind of a John Knox of later days. It seemed as if he could not ask God to forgive such a stupendous folly as the setting up of visible objects of worship, and the turning away from the true invisible God. O idolatry, what an accursed sin you are and how rampant are you in this land at this day!

10-12. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

Whatever God does or does not do, there is one role of His procedure from which He never deviates, namely, to cast down the proud and those who boast from their high places. He condescends to the humble and He has a tender eye to the contrite, but wherever man, the creature, dares to think himself great, God will bare His arm to overthrow him, or puff at him—for a puff will do it—and he shall pass away.

13-16. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

No matter what it is that man sets up, however good or great, if he dares to bring it into competition with God, God's hand is against him and He will break it in pieces. Whenever God comes out of His secret place, this is always the end of it. He came against Babylon and against Nineveh. Ay, ask the traveler who has wonderingly descended into those vast mounds, "Where are those mighty monarchies now?" Where is the power of Sennacherib and where the might of Nebuchadnezzar? They have gone. The dust is their sole monument.

Turn ye, in later days to the great power of Rome, and as one walks through Rome, that vast mausoleum of an empire—where one treads at every step upon an empire's dust—what think you but that God has broken the iron kingdom and made what seemed to be an omnipotent power to pass away from off the face of the earth? Woe unto all that is great and all that is high and all that exalts itself above God. Whether a temporal power, or a spiritual, it shall pass away like a dream of the night, or a vision of the air, for the Lord is—and all else is nothing.

17-20. *And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;*

The worshipper of idols shall be ashamed of them. The precious metal shall not save them—the work of art for which so many plead—“It is true the thing is defiling and idolatrous,” say some, “but look at the skill, the taste, the handicraft, the precious metal.” When God makes bare His arm, they shall fling even gold and silver to the moles and to the bats.

21-22. *To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

What a rebuke this is to kingcraft and to priestcraft especially. “Wherein is he to be accounted of?” You may lay what hands you will on him, and you may gird him with what robes you please, and you may pour upon him your anointing oil and your sacred chrisms—but what is he, after all, but a man whose breath is in his nostrils? Cease ye from him, “for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.